

Message Text

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ACTION SS-15

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9828

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 12308

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR/ FR

SUBJECT: YOUTH PARA

REF: DEPARTMENT' S 070302; PARIS' A-555 OF JUNE 9, 1972 AND
A-247 OF APRIL 2, 1973

RESPONSE IS KEYED TO ROMAN NUMERAL PARAGRAPHS REFTEL.

I.

A. YOUTH CATEGORIES

YOUNG POLITICAL LEADERS 40 PERCENT

YOUNG MILITARY LEADERS 5 PERCENT

YOUNG BUREAUCRATS (THROUGHOUT CENTRALIZED FRENCH
ADMINISTRATION IN PARIS) 5 PERCENT

MEDIA 5 PERCENT

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY 5 PERCENT

EDUCATION 15 PERCENT

ARTS AND LETTERS 5 PERCENT

LABOR LEADERS 5 PERCENT

SELECTED UNIVERSITIES (LES GRANDES ECOLES -- ELITE
GRADUATE SCHOOLS) 12 PERCENT

DISSIDENTS 3 PERCENT

B. RATIONALE

ALTHOUGH THE FIVE CONSTITUENT POSTS IN FRANCE HAVE A
YOUTH PROGRAM COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR RESOURCES, THE MAIN
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THRUST OF THE MISSION' S YOUTH EFFORT IS IN PARIS. THE MAIN TARGETS OF THE YOUTH PROGRAM ARE YOUNG POLITICAL LEADERS AND STUDENTS IN THE PRESTIGIOUS GRADUATE SCHOOLS (CALLED LES GRANDES ECOLES) WHICH TRAIN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENTAL, ADMINISTRATIVE, BUSINESS AND MILITARY ELITE. FRANCE IS HIGHLY CENTRALIZED, BOTH ADMINIS- TRATIVELY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY, I. E., DECISION- MAKING ON ALMOST EVERY IMPORTANT ISSUE IS IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER REFERRED TO THE PARIS BUREAUCRACY. OUR EFFORTS, THEREFORE, ARE DIRECTED AT AN EASILY IDENTIFIABLE TARGET GROUP OF FUTURE LEADERS AND OPINION MOULDERS.

C. SHORT- TERM IMPACT OF YOUTH

YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR TARGET GROUPS, AS INDICATED ABOVE, ARE LIABLE TO REACH LEVELS OF RESPONSIBILITY EARLIER IN FRANCE THAN IS THE CASE IN THE US. IT IS NOT UNUSUAL, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR A STUDENT AT THE ECOLE NATIONALE D' ADMINISTRATION (ENA) IMMEDIATELY AFTER GRADUATION, TO BECOME EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT OR STAFF ASSISTANT (CHEF DE CABINET) AT AN IMPORTANT MINISTRY. IN A BROADER SENSE, " YOUTH" IN PRESENTLY A STATE OF TURMOIL IN FRANCE. THIS SPRING BROUGHT ITS USUAL QUOTA OF STREET DEMONSTRATIONS AND AGITATION IN UNIVERSITIES AND HIGH SCHOOLS. SHOULD SOCIAL UNREST CREATED BY STUDENT DISORDERS BECOME EXPLOSIVE, US INTERESTS MIGHT EVENTUALLY BE AFFECTED, E. G., BY REDUCING FRANCE TO A STATE OF SUSTAINED CHAOS WITH REPERCUSSIONS ON BOTH BILATERAL FRANCO- AMERICAN INTERESTS AND ON FRANCE' S ROLE WITHIN THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. WE DO NOT FORESEE SUCH A DRASTIC SITUATION DEVELOPING BUT, GIVEN FRENCH HISTORY, THE POSSIBILITY OF VIOLENT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE CANNOT BE DISMISSED. MOREOVER, A DEGREE OF ANTI- AMERICANISM IS PART OF THE " INTELLECTUAL" BAGGAGE OF SOME FRENCH STUDENTS. THIS ANTI- AMERICANISM APPEARS TO BE AN ELEMENT OF THE SMALL BUT INFLUENTIAL YOUTH " SUB- CULTURE" WHICH THRIVES IN THE UNIVERSITY AND TO SOME EXTENT HIGH- SCHOOL COMMUNITIES IN PARIS AND OTHER MAJOR CITIES. IT PROBABLY RESULTS FROM UNFAVORABLE PUBLICITY ABOUT THE UNITED STATES INVOLVEMENT IN VIETNAM, THE ENVIABLE

STATUS OF THE US AS THE " RICHEST COUNTRY IN THE WORLD," ETC. EFFORTS TO

PRESENT A MORE BALANCED VIEW OF THE UNITED STATES TO SELECTED YOUTH LEADERSHIP GROUPS ARE, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT IF THIS ATTITUDE, WHICH IS NOW SOMETHING OF A FAD, IS NOT TO TAKE DEEPER, MORE LASTING ROOTS.

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A. OBJECTIVES

ASSURE ACCESS TO KEY FUTURE LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOP INFLUENTIAL

RELATIONSHIP WITH LEADERS OF POLITICALLY- AWARE YOUTH

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